

MARJORIE  
L. C. PICKTHALL

THE DRIFT OF  
PINIONS

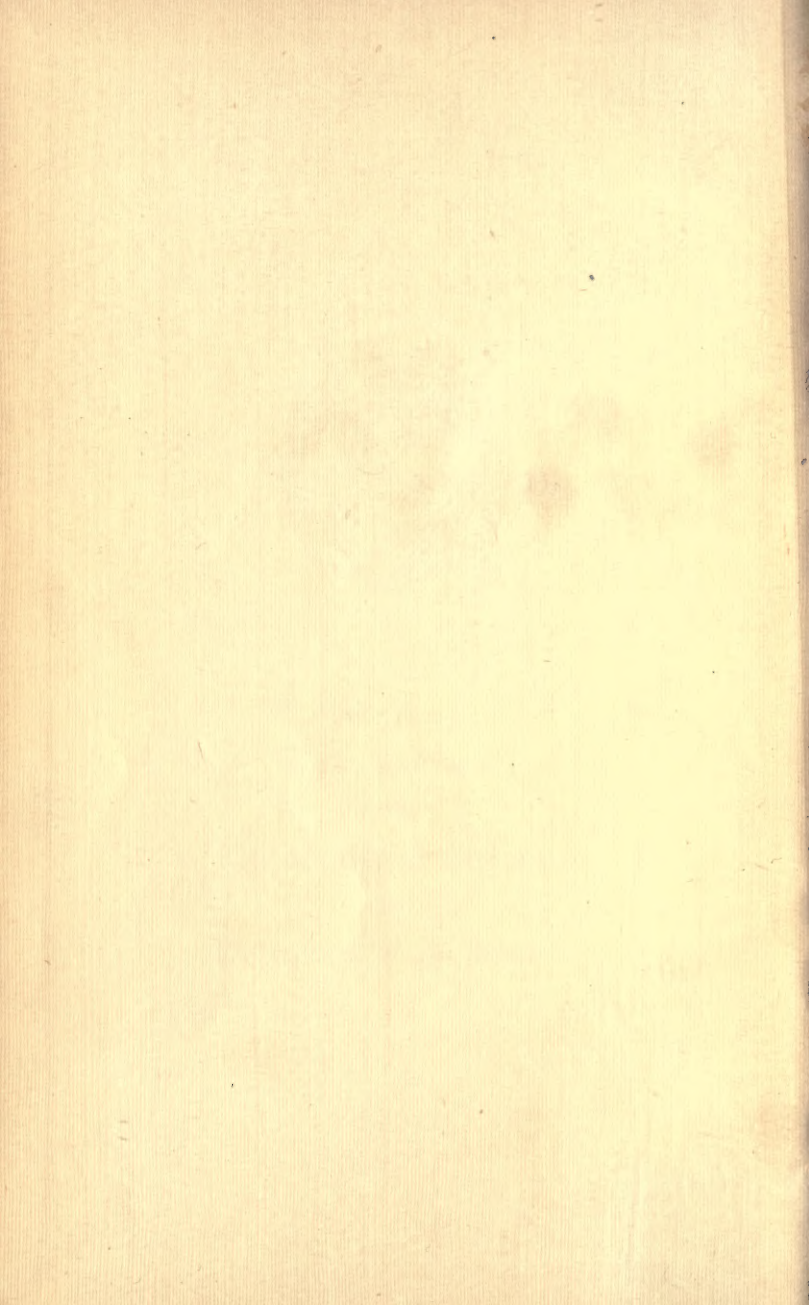
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THE DRIFT OF PINIONS





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# THE DRIFT OF PINIONS BY MARJORIE L. C. PICKTHALL



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BY MARJORIE L. C. PICKTHAL,

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M. L. C. P.

*Victoria College, Toronto,*  
*September, 1913.*

IN MEMORY OF  
MY MOTHER

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THE DRIFT OF PINIONS  
MARJORIE L. C. PICKTHALL







## ARMOREL

**W**HEN within the rippling tide  
Shakes the silver-pointed moon,  
When the rainbow flies of noon  
All have died,

When the bats go wheeling far,  
And the mournful owl has cried  
Twice or thrice a-down the glen  
Gray with gathering shade, and when  
Gates o' dream are held ajar,—  
From the alders in the dell,  
From the bracken fronds astir,  
Elfin voices call to her,—

“Armored!”

She shall glide the garden down,  
Treading softly, treading slow,  
And with silent feet shall go  
Past the Mary-lilies white,  
Past the pansies, gold and brown,  
Grown for her delight.

One white moth her guide shall be,  
She shall follow where he flies,  
Patiently, with dream-lit eyes;  
Past the thyme and savoury,  
Past the mystic asphodel,  
For the voices in her ear  
Call her softly, call her clear,—  
“Armored!”

Into valleys strange and dim,  
All unseen and all unknown,  
Fleetly shall she follow him,  
Fairy-led, alone.  
She shall hear within the brake  
Elfin crickets pipe and sing,  
While the elfin spiders make  
Sendal for her furnishing,  
Red as pimpernel.  
She shall see the dreams go by,  
Silver-pinioned, through the sky;  
Where she wanders none may tell,  
But the voices come and go,  
Calling sweetly, calling low,  
“Armored!”

## THE LITTLE FAUNS TO PROSERPINE

**B**ROWNER than the hazel-husk, swifter  
than the wind,  
Though you turn from heath and hill, we  
are hard behind,  
Singing, "Ere the sorrows rise, ere the gates  
unclose  
Bind above your wistful eyes the memory  
of a rose."

Dark Iacchus pipes the kine shivering from  
the whin,  
Wraps him in a she-goat's fell above the  
panther skin.  
Now we husk the corn for bread, turn the  
mill for hire,  
Hoof by hoof and head by head about the  
herdsman's fire.

Ai, Adonis, where he gleams, slender and  
at rest,  
One has built a roof of dreams where the  
white doves nest.  
Ere they bring the wine-dark bowl, ere the  
gates unbar,  
Take, O take within your soul the shadow  
of a star.

Now the vintage feast is done, now the  
    melons glow  
Gold along the raftered thatch beneath a  
    thread of snow.  
Dian's bugle bids the dawn sweep the  
    upland clear,  
Where we snared the silken fawn, where we  
    ran the deer.

Through the dark reeds wet with rain, past  
    the singing foam  
Went the light-foot Mysian maids, calling  
    Hylas home.  
Syrinx felt the silver spell fold her at her  
    need.  
Hear, ere yet you say farewell, the wind  
    along the reed.

Golden as the earliest leaf loosened from the  
    spray,  
Grave Alcestis drank of grief for her lord's  
    delay.  
Ere you choose the bitter part, learn the  
    changeless wrong,  
Bind above your breaking heart the echo of  
    a song.

Now the chestnut burrs are down ; aspen-  
shaws are pale ;

Now across the plunging reef reels the last  
red sail.

Ere the wild, black horses cry, ere the night  
has birth,

Take, ere yet you say good-bye, the love of  
all the earth.

## WANDERLIED

**O**, WEST of all the westward roads that  
woo ye to their winding,  
O, south of all the southward ways that call  
ye to the sea,  
There's a little lonely garden that would  
pay ye for the finding,  
With a fairy-ring within it and an old thorn  
tree.

O, there upon the brink of morn the  
thrushes would be calling,  
And the little lilting linnets, sure they'd  
wake me from the dead ;  
With the lime trees all in blossom and the  
soft leaf-shadows falling,  
O, there I'd have a place at last to lay my  
head.

O, would I had a swallow's wings, for then  
I'd fly and find it ;  
O, would I had a swallow's heart, for then  
I'd love to roam !  
With an orchard on the hillside and an old,  
old man to mind it,  
O, there I'd lift my lodge at last and make  
my home.

O, there I'd see the tide come in along the  
whispering reaches,  
O, there I'd lie and watch the sails go  
shining to the west.  
And where the fir-wood follows on the wide  
unswerving beaches,  
It's there I'd lay me down at last and take  
my rest.

## TO ALCITHOË

**I**N your dim Greece of old, Alcithoë,  
Death like a lover sought and crowned  
you young,  
Between the olive orchards and the sea.

When they had twined your myrtle-buds,  
and hung  
The stately cypress at your door, they said,  
“Alcithoë is dead,  
Before whose feet the flaming crocus sprung,  
For whom the red rose opened ere the prime;  
Those the gods love are taken before their  
time.” —

Ah! why did no one, watching you alone,  
Snare your dead beauty in undying stone?  
The gold hair bound beneath its golden  
band,  
The milk-white poppies closed within your  
hand;  
That the harsh world a little space might  
keep  
The last, still, exquisite vision of your sleep.

## THE SEA WITCH

**E**NDLESSLY fell her chestnut flowers,  
Faint snow throughout the honeyed  
dark ;

The myrtle spread his boughs to drink  
Deep draughts of salt from the sea's brink,  
And like a moon-dial swung her tower's  
Straight shadow o'er her warded park.

From her calm coasts the galleons fled,  
The fisher steered him further west,  
No port was hailed, no keel came home  
Across that pale, enchanted foam,  
But by her roof the thrushes fed  
And wandering swallows found their rest.

The shadows touched her tenderly,  
The red beam lingered on her dress;  
The white gull and the osprey knew  
Her tower across the leagues of blue.  
The wild swan when he sought the sea  
Was laggard through her loveliness.

## THE IMMORTAL

**B**EAUTY is still immortal in our eyes;  
When sways no more the spirit-haunted  
reed,  
When the wild grape shall build  
No more her canopies,  
When blows no more the moon-gray thistle  
seed,  
When the last bell has lulled the white  
flocks home,  
When the last eve has stilled  
The wandering wing and touched the dying  
foam,  
When the last moon burns low, and, spark  
by spark,  
The little worlds die out along the dark,—

Beauty that rosed the moth-wing, touched  
the land  
With clover-horns and delicate faint flowers,  
Beauty that bade the showers  
Beat on the violet's face,  
Shall hold the eternal heavens within their  
place  
And hear new stars come singing from God's  
hand.

## DAWN

**O** KEEP the world forever at the dawn,  
Ere yet the opals, cobweb-strung,  
have dried,  
Ere yet too bounteous gifts have marred the  
morn  
Or fading stars have died.  
O, keep the eastern gold no wider than  
An angel's finger-span,  
And hush the increasing thunder of the sea  
To murmuring melody  
In those fair coves where tempests ne'er  
should be.

Hold back the line of shoreward-sweeping  
surge  
And veil each deep sea-pool in pearlier mist,  
Ere yet the silver ripples on the verge  
Have turned to amethyst.  
Fling back the chariot of encroaching day  
And call the winds away  
Ere yet they sigh, and let the hastening sun  
Along his path in heaven no higher run,  
But show through all the years his golden  
rim  
With shadows lingering dim  
Forever o'er the world awaiting him.

Hold every bird with still and drowsy wing,  
That in the breathless hush no clamorous  
throat  
Shall break the peace that hangs on every-  
thing  
With shrill awakening note;  
Keep fast the half-seen beauties of the rose  
In undisturbed repose,  
Check all the iris buds where they unfold  
Impatient from their hold,  
And close the cowslips' cups of honeyed  
gold.

Keep all things hushed, so hushed we seem  
to hear  
The sounds of low-swung clouds that sweep  
the trees;  
Let now no harsher music reach the ear,  
No earthlier sounds than these,  
When whispering shadows move within the  
grass,  
And airy tremors pass  
Through all the earth with life awakening  
thrilled,  
And so forever stilled,  
Too sweet in promise e'er to be fulfilled.

O keep the world forever at the dawn,  
Yet, keeping so, let nothing lifeless seem,  
But hushed, as if the miracle of morn  
Were trembling in its dream.  
Some shadowy moth may pass with downy  
    flight  
And fade before the sight,  
While in the unlightened darkness of the  
    wall  
The chirping crickets call;  
From forest pools where fragrant lilies are  
A breath shall pass afar,  
And o'er the crested pine shall hang one  
    star.

## EVENING

**W**HEN the white iris folds the drows-  
ing bee,  
When the first cricket wakes  
The fairy hosts of his enchanted brakes,  
When the dark moth has sought the lilac  
tree,  
And the young stars, like jasmine of the  
skies,  
Are opening on the silence, Lord, there lies  
Dew on Thy rose and dream upon mine eyes.

Lovely the day, when life is robed in splen-  
dour,  
Walking the ways of God and strong with  
wine,  
But the pale eve is wonderful and tender,  
And night is more divine.  
Fold my faint olives from their shimmering  
plain,  
O shadow of sweet darkness fringed with  
rain.  
Give me to night again.

Give me to day no more. I have bethought  
me

Silence is more than laughter, sleep than  
tears.

Sleep like a lover faithfully hath sought me  
Down the enduring years.

Where stray the first white fatlings of the  
fold,

Where the Lent-lily droops her earlier gold  
Sleep waits me as of old.

Grant me sweet sleep, for light is unavailing  
When patient eyes grow weary of the day.

Young lambs creep close and tender wings  
are failing,

And I grow tired as they.

Light as the long wave leaves the lonely  
shore,

Our boughs have lost the bloom that  
morning bore.

Give me to day no more.

## THE GREEN MONTH

**W**HAT of all the colours shall I bring  
you for your fairing,  
Fit to lay your fingers on, fine enough for  
you?—

Yellow for the ripened rye, white for ladies'  
wearing,

Red for briar-roses, or the skies' own blue?

Nay, for spring has touched the elm, spring  
has found the willow,

Winds that call the swallow home sway the  
boughs apart ;

Green shall all my curtains be, green shall  
be my pillow,

Green I'll wear within my hair, and green  
upon my heart.

## SONG OF LATE SEPTEMBER

**I**N this irised net I keep  
All the moth-winged winds of sleep,  
In this basket woven of willow  
I have silk-weed for your pillow.  
In this pouch of plaited reeds  
Stars I bear for silver beads.  
Choose my pippins for your money,  
Reddening pears as smooth as honey,  
Golden grapes and apricots,  
Herbs from well-grown garden plots ;  
Basil, balm, and savoury,  
All sweet-smelling things there be,  
Fruits a many and flowers a few,—  
Fiery dahlias drooped in dew,  
Wood-grown asters faint as smoke,  
Flame of maple, frond of oak.

In this box of foreign woods  
I have delicate woven goods ;  
Orient laces light as mist,  
Amber veils and amethyst,  
Ivory pins like hardened milk,  
Cloaks of silver-shining silk  
Wrought with strange embroideries  
Of peacock plumes and rose-berries.  
Buy a king's crown lost of old,

Dark with sardius sunk in gold.  
Buy my gloves of spiders spun,  
Cool as water, warm as sun ;  
Buy my shoon of yellow leathers  
Lined with fur and owlet feathers ;  
Buy a chain of emerald stones  
Or scarlet seeds or cedar cones.  
All sweet, delicate things there be  
Honest folk may buy of me.  
Ere the earliest thrush has flown  
In my eyes the dawns are shown.  
On my lips the summer lingers,  
Rain has jewelled all my fingers ;  
In my hand the crickets sing,  
And the moon's my golden ring.

## FROST SONG

**H**ERE where the bee slept and the orchis  
lifted

Her honeying pipes of pearl, her velvet lip,  
Only the swart leaves of the oak lie drifted  
In sombre fellowship.

Here where the flame-weed set the lands  
alight,  
Lies the bleak upland, webbed and crowned  
with white.

Build high the logs, O love, and in thine  
eyes

Let me believe the summer lingers late.  
We shall not miss her passive pageantries,  
We are not desolate,  
When on the sill, across the window bars,  
Kind winter flings her flowers and her stars.

## DREAM RIVER

**W**IND-SILVERED willows hedge the  
stream,  
And all within is hushed and cool.  
The water, in an endless dream,  
Goes sliding down from pool to pool.  
And every pool a sapphire is,  
From shadowy deep to sunlit edge,  
Ribbioned around with irises  
And cleft with emerald spears of sedge.

O, every morn the winds are stilled,  
The sunlight falls in amber bars.  
O, every night the pools are filled  
With silver brede of shaken stars.  
O, every morn the sparrow flings  
His elfin trills athwart the hush,  
And here unseen at eve there sings  
One crystal-throated hermit-thrush.

## SWALLOWS

**O** LITTLE hearts, beat home, beat home,  
Here is no place to rest.  
Night darkens on the falling foam  
And on the fading west.  
O little wings, beat home, beat home.  
Love may no longer roam.

O, Love has touched the fields of wheat  
And Love has crowned the corn,  
And we must follow Love's white feet  
Through all the ways of morn.  
Through all the silver roads of air  
We pass and have no care.

The silver roads of Love are wide,  
O winds that turn, O stars that guide.  
Sweet are the ways that Love has trod  
Through the clear skies that reach to God.  
But in the cliff-grass Love builds deep  
A place where wandering wings may sleep.

## THE POOL

COME with me, follow me, swift as a  
moth,  
Ere the wood-doves waken.  
Lift the long leaves and look down, look  
down  
Where the light is shaken,  
Amber and brown,  
On the woven ivory roots of the reed,  
On a floating flower and a weft of weed  
And a feather of froth.

Here in the night all wonders are,  
Lapped in the lift of the ripple's swing,—  
A silver shell and a shaken star,  
And a white moth's wing.  
Here the young moon when the mists un-  
close  
Swims like the bud of a golden rose.

I would live like an elf where the wild  
grapes cling,  
I would chase the thrush  
From the red rose-berries.  
All the day long I would laugh and swing  
With the black choke-cherries.

I would shake the bees from the milkweed  
blossoms,

And cool, O cool,

Night after night I would leap in the pool,  
And sleep with the fish in the roots of the  
rush.

Clear, O clear my dreams should be made  
Of emerald light and amber shade,  
Of silver shallows and golden glooms.

Sweet, O sweet my dreams should be  
As the dark, sweet water enfolding me  
Safe as a blind shell under the sea.

## O SILVER ROSE

THE dark hour turns so slowly and so  
sweet,  
The last still hour soft-fallen from the stars.  
To-morrow I may kneel and touch thy feet,  
O Rose of all Shiraz.

Lay wide thine amorous lattice to the south,  
O Silver Rose, when roses breathe thy name,  
And thou at dawn shalt feel upon thy mouth  
The kiss I dared not claim.

Discrowned, dishonoured, reft of pride and  
power,  
From the red battle where they hailed me  
lord,  
O Silver Rose, O sweet Pomegranate  
Flower,  
I turn me to their sword.

Life hath so held me to an empty part,  
Life hath so snared me, bound and made  
me blind.  
To-morrow I may rest upon thy heart,  
For death shall prove more kind.

## THE BRIDEGROOM OF CANA

*"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee. . . .  
And both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the  
marriage."*

VEIL thine eyes, O belovéd, my spouse,  
Turn them away,  
Lest in their light my life withdrawn  
Dies as a star, as a star in the day,  
As a dream in the dawn.

Slenderly hang the olive leaves  
Sighing apart ;  
The rose and silver doves in the eaves  
With a murmur of music bind our house.  
Honey and wine in thy words are stored,  
Thy lips are bright as the edge of a sword  
That hath found my heart,  
That hath found my heart.

Sweet, I have waked from a dream of thee,—  
And of Him.

He who came when the songs were done.  
From the net of thy smiles my heart went  
free

And the golden lure of thy love grew dim.  
I turned to them asking, "Who is He,  
Royal and sad, who comes to the feast  
And sits Him down in the place of the least?"  
And they said, "He is Jesus, the carpenter's  
son."

Hear how my harp on a single string  
Murmurs of love.  
Down in the fields the thrushes sing  
And the lark is lost in the light above,  
Lost in the infinite, glowing whole,  
As I in thy soul,  
As I in thy soul.

Love, I am fain for thy glowing grace  
As the pool for the star, as the rain for the  
rill.

Turn to me, trust to me, mirror me  
As the star in the pool, as the cloud in the  
sea.

Love, I looked awhile in His face  
And was still.

The shaft of the dawn strikes clear and  
sharp :

Hush, my harp.

Hush, my harp, for the day is begun,  
And the lifting, shimmering flight of the  
swallow

Breaks in a curve on the brink of morn,  
Over the sycamores, over the corn,  
Cling to me, cleave to me, prison me  
As the mote in the flame, as the shell in the  
sea,

For the winds of the dawn say, " Follow,  
follow

Jesus Bar-Joseph, the carpenter's son."

## A MOTHER IN EGYPT

*"About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt : and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon the throne, even unto the firstborn of the maid-servant that is behind the mill."*

**I**S the noise of grief in the palace over the  
river

For this silent one at my side ?

There came a hush in the night, and he rose  
with his hands a-quiver

Like lotus petals adrift on the swing of the  
tide.

O small soft hands, the day groweth old for  
sleeping !

O small still feet, rise up, for the hour is  
late !

Rise up, my son, for I hear them mourning  
and weeping

In the temple down by the gate.

Hushed is the face that was wont to brighten  
    with laughter  
When I sang at the mill,  
And silence unbroken shall greet the sor-  
    rowful dawns hereafter,  
The house shall be still.  
Voice after voice takes up the burden of  
    wailing,—  
Do you heed, do you hear?—in the high-  
    priest's house by the wall ;  
But mine is the grief, and their sorrow is  
    all unavailing.  
Will he wake at their call ?

Something I saw of the broad, dim wings  
    half folding  
The passionless brow.  
Something I saw of the sword the shadowy  
    hands were holding,—  
What matters it now ?  
I held you close, dear face, as I knelt and  
    harkened  
To the wind that cried last night like a soul  
    in sin,  
When the broad, bright stars dropped down  
    and the soft sky darkened,  
And the Presence moved therein.

I have heard men speak in the market-place  
of the city,  
Low voiced, in a breath,  
Of a god who is stronger than ours, and who  
knows not changing nor pity,  
Whose anger is death.  
Nothing I know of the lords of the outland  
races,  
But Amun is gentle and Hathor the Mother  
is mild,  
And who would descend from the light of  
the peaceful places  
To war on a child ?

Yet here he lies, with a scarlet pomegranate  
petal  
Blown down on his cheek.  
The slow sun sinks to the sand like a shield  
of some burnished metal,  
But he does not speak.  
I have called, I have sung, but he neither  
will hear nor waken ;  
So lightly, so whitely he lies in the curve of  
my arm,  
Like a feather let fall from the bird that the  
arrow hath taken.  
Who could see him, and harm ?

“ The swallow flies home to her sleep in the  
eaves of the altar,  
And the crane to her nest,”—  
So do we sing o’er the mill, and why, ah,  
why should I falter,  
Since he goes to his rest?  
Does he play in their flowers as he played  
among these with his mother?  
Do the gods smile downward and love him  
and give him their care?  
Guard him well, O ye gods, till I come ;  
lest the wrath of that Other  
Should reach to him there !

## ST. YVES' POOR

**J**EFFIK was there, and Matthieu, and  
brown Bran,  
Warped in old wars and babbling of the  
sword,  
And Jannedik, a white rose pinched and  
paled  
With the world's frosts, and many more  
beside,  
Lamed, rheumed and palsied, aged, impo-  
tent  
Of all but hunger and blind lifted hands.  
I set the doors wide at the given hour,  
Took the great baskets piled with bread,  
the fish  
Yet silvered of the sea, the curds of milk,  
And called them, Brethren, brake, and blest,  
and gave.

For O, my Lord, the house dove knows her  
nest  
Above my window builded from the rain ;  
In the brown mere the heron finds her  
rest,  
But these shall seek in vain.

And O, my Lord, the thrush may fold her  
wing,  
The curlew seek the long lift of the seas,  
The wild swan sleep amid his journeying,—  
There is no rest for these.

Thy dead are sheltered ; housed and warmed  
they wait  
Under the golden fern, the falling foam;  
But these, Thy living, wander desolate  
And have not any home.

I called them, Brethren, brake, and blest,  
and gave.  
Old Jeffik had her withered hand to show,  
Young Jannedik had dreamed of death, and  
Bran  
Would tell me wonders wrought on fields  
of war,  
When Michael and his warriors rode the  
storm,  
And all the heavens were thrilled with  
clanging spears,—  
Ah, God, my poor, my poor.—Till there  
came one  
Wrapped in foul rags, who caught me by  
the robe,  
And pleaded, “ Bread, my father.”

In his hand  
I laid the last loaf of the daily dole,  
Saw on the palm a red wound like a star,  
And bade him, "Let me bind it."

"These my wounds,"  
He answered softly, "daily dost thou bind."  
And I, "My son, I have not seen thy face.  
But thy bruised feet have trodden on my  
heart.

I will get water for thee."

"These my hurts,"  
Again he answered, "daily dost thou wash."  
And I once more, "My son, I know thee  
not,  
But the bleak wind blows bitter from the  
sea,  
And even the gorse is perished. Rest thou  
here."

And he again, "My rest is in thy heart.  
I take from thee as I have given to thee.  
Dost thou not know Me, Breton?"

I,—“My Lord!”—

A scent of lilies on the cold sea-wind,  
A thin, white blaze of wings, a face of flame  
Over the gateway, and the vision passed,  
And there were only Matthieu and brown  
Bran,

And the young girl, the foam-white Janne-  
dik,  
Wondering to see their father rapt from  
them,  
And Jeffik weeping o'er her withered hand.

## THE LITTLE SISTER OF THE PROPHET

*"If there arise among you a prophet or dreamer. . ."*

**I** HAVE left a basket of dates  
In the cool dark room that is under the  
vine,  
Some curds set out in two little crimson  
plates  
And a flask of the amber wine,  
And cakes most cunningly beaten  
Of savoury herbs, and spice, and the delicate  
wheaten  
Flour that is best,  
And all to lighten his spirit and sweeten  
his rest.

This morning he cried, "Awake,  
And see what the wonderful grace of the  
Lord hath revealed!"  
And we ran for his sake,  
But 'twas only the dawn outspread o'er our  
father's field,  
And the house of the potter white in the  
valley below.  
But his hands were upraised to the east and  
he cried to us, "So

Ye may ponder and read  
The strength and the beauty of God out-  
rolled in a fiery screed !”

Then the little brown mother smiled,  
As one does on the words of a well-loved  
child,  
And, “ Son,” she replied, “ have the oxen  
been watered and fed ?  
For work is to do, though the skies be never  
so red,  
And already the first sweet hours of the  
day are spent.”  
And he sighed, and went.

Will he come from the byre  
With his head all misty with dreams, and  
his eyes on fire,  
Shaking us all with the weight of the words  
of his passion ?  
I will give him raisins instead of dates,  
And wreathe young leaves on the little red  
plates.  
I will put on my new head-tyre,  
And braid my hair in a comelier fashion.  
Will he note ? Will he mind ?  
Will he touch my cheek as he used to, and  
laugh and be kind ?

## PIETER MARINUS

**L**ORD, I have known all fruits of this  
thy world ;

Like Solomon king, I have been fain of  
all,—

War, women, and wine,—but mine was  
spirit of Nantes.

And now, O Lord, I'm old and fain for Thee.

But, Lord, my soul's so grimed and weather-  
worn,

So warped and wrung with all iniquities,

Piracies, brawls, and cheated revenues,

There's not a saint but would look twice at  
it.

So, when my time comes, send no angels  
down

With lutes, and harps, and foreign instru-  
ments,

To pipe old Pieter's spirit up to heaven

Past his tall namesake sturdy at his post.

But let me lie awhile in these Thy seas.

Let the soft Gulf Stream and the long South  
Drift,

And the swift tides that rim the Labrador,

Beat on my soul and wash it clean again.

And when Thy waves have smoothed me of  
    my sins,  
White as the sea-mew or the wind-spun  
    foam,  
Clean as the clear-cut images of stars  
That swing between the swells,—then, then,  
    O Lord,  
Lean out, lean out from heaven and call  
    me thus,  
“Come up, thou soul of Pieter Marinus,”  
And I’ll go home.

## THE LAMP OF POOR SOULS

*In many English churches before the Reformation there was kept a little lamp continually burning, called the Lamp of Poor Souls. People were reminded thereby to pray for the souls of those dead whose kinsfolk were too poor to pay for prayers and masses.*

ABOVE my head the shields are stained  
with rust,  
The wind has taken his spoil, the moth his  
part ;  
Dust of dead men beneath my knees, and  
dust,  
Lord, in my heart.

Lay Thou the hand of faith upon my fears ;  
The priest has prayed, the silver bell has  
rung,  
But not for him. O unforgotten tears,  
He was so young !

Shine, little lamp, nor let thy light grow  
dim.  
Into what vast, dread dreams, what lonely  
lands,  
Into what griefs hath death delivered him,  
Far from my hands ?

Cradled is he, with half his prayers forgot.  
I cannot learn the level way he goes.  
He whom the harvest hath remembered not  
Sleeps with the rose.

Shine, little lamp, fed with sweet oil of  
prayers.  
Shine, little lamp, as God's own eyes may  
shine,  
When He treads softly down His starry  
stairs  
And whispers, "Thou art Mine."

Shine, little lamp, for love hath fed thy  
gleam.  
Sleep, little soul, by God's own hands set  
free.  
Cling to His arms and sleep, and sleeping,  
dream,  
And dreaming, look for me.

## IN THE GARDENS OF SHUSHAN

**B**E pitiful ! Her lips have touched this  
cool

Clear stream that sets the long green leaves  
astir.

The very doves that dream beside the pool  
Sang their soft notes to her.

For her these doors that claim the amorous  
south,

Bound in red bronze and stayed with cedar-  
wood.

And here the bees sought honey from her  
mouth,

So like a flower she stood.

For her the globed pomegranates grew, and  
all

Sweet savoury fruits rose perfect from their  
flower.

Here has her soul known silence and the  
fall

Of each enchanted hour.

Under her feet all beauty was laid low,  
In her deep eyes all beauty was made clear.  
When the king called her through the even-  
ing glow,  
“ O Vashti, I am here !”

Still the sweet wells return to me her face,  
Still her lost name on every wind is blown.  
The shadows and the silence of this place  
Are hers alone.

## PÈRE LALEMANT

**I** LIFT the Lord on high,  
Under the murmuring hemlock boughs,  
and see

The small birds of the forest lingering by  
And making melody.

These are mine acolytes and these my choir,  
And this mine altar in the cool green shade,  
Where the wild soft-eyed does draw nigh  
Wondering, as in the byre  
Of Bethlehem the oxen heard Thy cry  
And saw Thee, unafraid.

My boatmen sit apart,  
Wolf-eyed, wolf-sinewed, stiller than the  
trees.

Help me, O Lord, for very slow of heart  
And hard of faith are these.

Cruel are they, yet Thy children. Foul are  
they,

Yet wert Thou born to save them utterly.

Then make me as I pray,

Just to their hates, kind to their sorrows,  
wise

After their speech, and strong before their  
free

Indomitable eyes.

Do the French lilies reign  
Over Mont Royal and Stadacona still?  
Up the St. Lawrence comes the spring again,  
Crowning each southward hill  
And blossoming pool with beauty, while I  
    roam  
Far from the perilous folds that are my  
    home,  
There where we built St. Ignace for our  
    needs,  
Shaped the rough roof tree, turned the first  
    sweet sod,  
St. Ignace and St. Louis, little beads  
On the rosary of God.

、 Pines shall Thy pillars be,  
Fairer than those Sidonian cedars brought  
By Hiram out of Tyre, and each birch-tree  
Shines like a holy thought.  
But come no worshippers ; shall I confess,  
St. Francis-like, the birds of the wilderness?  
O, with Thy love my lonely head uphold.  
A wandering shepherd I, who hath no sheep;  
A wandering soul, who hath no scrip, nor  
    gold,  
Nor anywhere to sleep.

My hour of rest is done ;  
On the smooth ripple lifts the long canoe ;  
The hemlocks murmur sadly as the sun  
Slants his dim arrows through.  
Whither I go I know not, nor the way,  
Dark with strange passions, vexed with  
    heathen charms,  
Holding I know not what of life or death ;  
Only be Thou beside me day by day,  
Thy rod my guide and comfort, underneath  
Thy everlasting arms.

## BEGA

**F**ROM the clouded belfry calling,  
Hear my soft ascending swells ;  
Hear my notes like swallows falling ;  
I am Bega, least of bells.  
When great 'Turkeful rolls and rings  
All the storm-touched turret swings,  
Echoing battle, loud and long.  
When great 'Tatwin wakening roars  
To the far-off shining shores,  
All the seamen know his song.  
I am Bega, least of bells :  
In my throat my message swells.  
I with all the winds a-thrill,  
Murmuring softly, murmuring still,  
    " God around me, God above me,  
    God to guard me, God to love me."

I am Bega, least of bells,  
Weaving wonder, wind-born spells.  
High above the morning mist,  
Wreathed in rose and amethyst,  
Still the dreams of music float  
Silver from my silver throat,  
Whispering beauty, whispering peace.  
When great 'Tatwin's golden voice  
Bids the listening land rejoice,

When great Turkeful rings and rolls  
Thunder down to trembling souls,  
Then my notes like curlews flying,  
Lifting, falling, sinking, sighing,  
Softly answer, softly cease.  
I with all the airs at play  
Murmuring sweetly, murmuring say,  
    “ God around me, God above me,  
    God to guard me, God to love me.”

## IN A MONASTERY GARDEN

**O**VER the long salt ridges  
And the gold sea-poppies between,  
They builded them wild-briar hedges,  
A church and a cloistered green.  
And when they were done with their praises,  
And the tides on the Fore beat slow,  
Under the white cliff-daisies  
They laid them down in a row.

Porphyry, Paul, and Peter,  
Jasper, and Joachim,—  
Was the psaltery music sweeter  
Than the throat of the thrush to him?  
Tired of their drones and their dirges,  
Where the young cliff-rabbits play,  
Wet with the salt of the surges,  
They laid them down for a day.

One may not call to the other  
There on the rim of the deep,  
Only the youngest brother  
Lies and smiles in his sleep.  
When the wild swan's shadow passes,  
When the ripe fruit falls to the sod,  
When the faint moth flies in the grasses  
He dreams in the hands of God.

Here for his hopes there follow  
The violets one by one.  
The dove is here and the swallow  
And the young leaf seeking the sun.  
And here when the last sail darkens  
And the last lone path is trod,  
Under the rose he harkens  
And smiles in the eyes of God.

## A CHILD'S SONG

**W**HEN the Child played in Galilee,  
He had no wine-clear maple leaves,  
No west winds singing of the sea  
Over the frosted sheaves ;  
But with pale myrrh His head was bound  
And crowned.

When the Child lived in Nazareth,  
He watched the golden anise seed,  
With daisies white in the wind's breath,  
And hyssop flowering for His need,  
While the late crocus from the sod  
Flamed for her God.

When the Child dwelt in Palestine,  
Over the brooks the willow grew,  
Olive and aspen, oak and pine,  
Sweet sycamore and yew,  
But one dark Tree of all the seven  
Stood high as heaven.

## A CHILD'S SONG OF CHRISTMAS

**M**Y counterpane is soft as silk,  
My blankets white as creamy milk.  
The hay was soft to Him, I know,  
Our little Lord of long ago.

Above the roof the pigeons fly  
In silver wheels across the sky.  
The stable-doves they cooed to them,  
Mary and Christ in Bethlehem.

Bright shines the sun across the drifts,  
And bright upon my Christmas gifts.  
They brought Him incense, myrrh,  
and gold,  
Our little Lord who lived of old.

O, soft and clear our mother sings  
Of Christmas joys and Christmas things.  
God's holy angels sang to them,  
Mary and Christ in Bethlehem.

Our hearts they hold all Christmas dear,  
And earth seems sweet and heaven seems  
near.  
O, heaven was in His sight, I know,  
That little Child of long ago.

## YOUTH'S END

**I** HAVE held my life too high,  
Spring and harvest, love and laughter,  
smile and sigh.

I should have held it lightly, like a young  
leaf rent in haste

From the willow in the waste.

A moment in my fingers ; then it fluttered,  
then it fled,

A little flame of red,

To the God-beholding desert where the  
soundless years go by,—

I have held my life too high.

I have held my death too dear,

Shame or honour, peace or peril, pride or  
fear.

I should have held it softly, as the little  
cloud that flies

When the heron takes the skies.

I should have held it kindly as a passing  
whisper,—“ Friend,

Here's the end,

Here the silver cord is loosened and the  
bowl is broken here,”—

But I held my death too dear.

## JASPER'S SONG

**W**HO goes down through the slim green  
sallows,

Soon, so soon?

Dawn is hard on the heels of the moon,

But never a lily the day-star knows

Is white, so white as the one who goes

Armed and shod, when the hyacinths darken.

Then hark, O harken !

And rouse the moths from the deep rose-  
mallows,

Call the wild hares down from the fallows,

Gather the silk of the young sea-poppies,

The bloom of the thistle, the bells of the foam;

Bind them all with a brown owl's feather,

Snare the winds in a golden tether,

Chase the clouds from the gipsy's weather,  
and follow, O follow the white spring  
home.

Who goes past with the wind that chilled us,  
Late, so late?

Fortune leans on the farmer's gate,

Watching the round sun low in the south,

With a plume in his cap and a rose at his  
mouth.

But O, for the folk who were free and merry  
There's never so much as a red rose-berry.

But old earth's warm as the wine that filled  
us,

And the fox and the little gray mouse shall  
build us

Walls of the sweet green gloom of the cedar,  
A roof of bracken, a curtain of whin;

One more rouse ere the bowl reposes

Low in the dust of our lost red roses,

One more song ere the cold night closes,  
and welcome, O welcome the dark  
death in !

## THE HILLMAN'S LASS

**O**VER the field where the grass is cool,  
( Follow the road who must ! )  
With a song for the beech and the brown  
pool,  
And the noiseless tread in the dust,  
With a laugh for the lazy hours that go,  
And the folk who pass us by.  
( The trees they grow so broad, so low,  
They shut me from the sky. )

Here be strawberries wild and sweet,  
( Follow the road who may ! )  
And here's a rest for a bairn's feet  
And a kiss at the close o' day.  
And here's a cloud from the shining sea  
Like a white moth in the night.  
( On the edge o' the barley field, may be  
The stars would show more bright. )

Cut me a flute where the reeds are brown.  
( Follow the road who will ! )  
O, I'll dress you fair in a green gown  
And a cloak that is finer still.  
Your sleeves shall be o' the fairies' lawn,  
Your shoon as red as the rose.  
( Do you think that the wind which wakes  
at dawn  
Will bring us a breath o' the snows ? )

O, the world's wide, and the world is long.  
( Follow the road who may ! )  
And here's a lilt of the wild song  
The Romany pipers play.  
And " Mine, " it sings, " is the moon's  
shield,  
And the cloak o' the cloud is mine."  
( Do you think that the lowland clover field  
Is sweet as the upland pine ? )

## THE SHEPHERD BOY

**W**HEN the red moon hangs over the  
fold,  
And the cypress shadow is rimmed with  
gold,  
O little sheep, I have laid me low,  
My face against the old earth's face,  
Where one by one the white moths go,  
And the brown bee has his sleeping place.  
And then I have whispered, Mother, hear,  
For the owls are awake and the night is  
near,  
And whether I lay me near or far  
No lip shall kiss me,  
No eye shall miss me,  
Saving the eye of a cold white star.

And the old brown woman answers mild,  
Rest you sate on my heart, O child.  
Many a shepherd, many a king,  
I fold them safe from their sorrowing.  
Gwenever's heart is bound with dust,  
Tristram dreams of the dappled doe,  
But the bugle moulders, the blade is rust ;  
Stilled are the trumpets of Jericho,  
And the tired men sleep by the walls of  
Troy.

Little and lonely,  
Knowing me only,  
Shall I not comfort you, shepherd-boy ?

When the wind wakes in the apple-tree,  
And the shy hare feeds on the wild fern  
stem,

I say my prayers to the Trinity,—  
The prayers that are three and the charms  
that are seven

To the angels guarding the towers of  
heaven,—

And I lay my head on her raiment's hem,  
Where the young grass darkens the straw-  
berry star,

Where the iris buds and the bellworts are.

All night I hear her breath go by

Under the arch of the empty sky.

All night her heart beats under my head,

And I lie as still as the ancient dead,

Warm as the young lambs there with the  
sheep.

I and no other,

Close to my Mother,

Fold my hands in her hands, and sleep.

## DUNA

**W**HEN I was a little lad  
    With folly on my lips,  
Fain was I for journeying  
All the seas in ships.  
But now across the southern swell,  
Every dawn I hear  
The little streams of Duna  
Running clear.

When I was a young man,  
Before my beard was gray,  
All to ships and sailormen  
I gave my heart away.  
But I'm weary of the sea-wind,  
I'm weary of the foam,  
And the little stars of Duna  
Call me home.

MY FATHER HE WAS A  
FISHERMAN

**M**Y father he was a fisherman,  
That wrought at the break o' day,  
And hither and thither the long tides ran  
I' the long blue bay.

"The tides go up and the tides go down,  
But what do you know of the sea?"  
Her voice, i' the long gray streets o' the  
town,  
Is singing to me.

"What do you know of the sails at dawn,  
What of the shell-white foam?"  
Cheerly and sweet, from a world withdrawn,  
They are calling me home.

"What is the grief you fain would tell  
When your eyes are turned on me?"  
O, well it was taught and I learned it well,—  
The grief o' the sea.

"Where do you travel and where do you  
sleep,  
Where shall you take your rest?"  
At the inn that shelters my father, deep  
I' the seas o' the west.

## JENNIFER'S LAD

**S**WEET Jennifer came calling me  
Along the shining beach.  
"There's green upon the hawthorn tree,  
There's bloom upon the peach.  
O, April's found the upland larch,  
The hazel in the hollow,"—  
But louder was the snare-drum with it's  
"March, march, march!"  
And clearer called the bugle, "Will you  
follow?"

Young Jennifer came seeking me  
With love upon her lips.  
"O, all kind angels keep the sea  
And fortune guard the ships.  
The Autumn winds have rent the larch,  
The south has won the swallow,"—  
But clearer beat the snare-drum with it's  
"March, march, march!"  
And sweeter sang the bugle, "Will you  
follow?"

### THREE ISLAND SONGS

**A**FTER the wind in the wood,  
Peace, and the night.  
After the bond and the brood,  
Flight.  
After the height and the hush  
Where the wild hawk swings,  
Heart of the earth-loving thrush  
Shaken with wings.

After the bloom and the leaf  
Rain on the nest.  
After the splendour and grief,  
Rest.  
After the hills and the far  
Glories and gleams,  
Cloud, and the dawn of a star,  
And dreams.

---

**O**, THE gray rocks of the islands and  
the hemlock green above them,  
The foam beneath the wild rose bloom, the  
star above the shoal.  
When I am old and weary I'll wake my  
heart to love them,  
For the blue ways of the islands are wound  
about my soul.

Here in the early even when the young gray  
dew is falling,  
And the king-heron seeks his mate beyond  
the loneliest wild,  
Still your heart in the twilight, and you'll  
hear the river calling  
Through all her outmost islands to seek her  
lastborn child.

---

**I** SAT among the green leaves, and heard  
the nuts falling,  
The broad red butterflies were gold against  
the sun,  
But in between the silence and the sweet  
birds calling  
The nuts fell one by one.

Why should they fall and the year but half  
over?  
Why should sorrow seek me and I so young  
and kind?  
The leaf is on the bough and the dew is on  
the clover,  
But the green nuts are falling in the wind.

O, I gave my lips away and all my soul  
behind them.

Why should trouble follow and the quick  
tears start ?

The little birds may love and fly with only  
God to mind them,

But the green nuts are falling on my heart.

## SERENADE

**D**ARK is the iris meadow,  
Dark is the ivory tower,  
And lightly the young moth's shadow  
Sleeps on the passion-flower.

Gone are our day's red roses.  
So lovely and lost and few,  
But the first star uncloses  
A silver bud in the blue.

Night, and a flame in the embers  
Where the seal of the years was set,—  
When the almond-bough remembers  
How shall my heart forget?

## THE LOVERS OF MARCHAID

**D**OMINIC came riding down, sworded,  
straight and splendid,  
Drave his hilt against her door, flung a  
golden chain.  
Said : " I'll teach your lips a song sweet as  
his that's ended,  
Ere the white rose call the bee, the almond  
flower again."

But he only saw her head bent within the  
gloom  
Over heaps of bridal thread bright as apple-  
bloom,  
Silver silk like rain that spread across the  
driving loom.

Dreaming Fanch, the cobbler's son, took his  
tools and laces,  
Wrought her shoes of scarlet dye, shoes as  
pale as snow ;  
" They shall lead her wildrose feet all the  
fairy paces  
Danced along the road of love, the road such  
feet should go "—

But he only saw her eyes turning from his  
gift

Out towards the silver skies where the white  
clouds drift,  
Where the wild gerfalcon flies, where the  
last sails lift.

Bran has built his homestead high where the  
hills may shield her,  
Where the young bird waits the spring,  
where the dawns are fair,  
Said : " I'll name my trees for her, since I  
may not yield her  
Stars of morning for her feet, of evening  
for her hair."

But he did not see them ride, seven dim sail  
and more,  
All along the harbour-side, white from shore  
to shore,  
Nor heard the voices of the tide crying at  
her door.

Jean-Marie has touched his pipe down  
beside the river  
When the young fox bends the fern, when  
the folds are still,  
Said : " I send her all the gifts that my love  
may give her,—  
Golden notes like golden birds to seek her  
at my will."

But he only found the waves, heard the sea-  
gull's cry,  
In and out the ocean caves, underneath the  
sky,  
All above the wind-washed graves where  
dead seamen lie.

## THE HOUSE'S SETTING

**H**ERE is no hedge of yewe to hold in  
griefe,

No cypresse nor long willow for despaire.

But the young birch displayes his cheerfulle  
leaf

In tracerie most faire.

Where the sunne falls at morn stand poplars  
seven

Where freely I of all sweete joyes may  
borrowe,

An elm that lifts his prayerfulle arms to  
Heaven,

And three tall pines for sorrowe.

## DEUS MISEREATUR

**P**LEASANT the ways whereon our feet  
were led,

Sweet the young hills, the valleys of content,  
But now the hours of dew and dream have  
fled.

Lord, we are spent.

We did not heed Thy warning in the skies,  
We have not heard Thy voice nor known  
Thy fold ;

But now the world is darkening to our eyes.  
Lord, we grow old.

Now the sweet stream turns bitter with our  
tears,

Now dies the star we followed in the west,  
Now are we sad and ill at ease with years.  
Lord, we would rest.

Lo, our proud lamps are emptied of their  
light,

Weary our hands to toil, our feet to roam ;  
Our day is past and swiftly falls Thy night.  
Lord, lead us home.

## FAME

**H**AVE I played fellowship with night,  
to see

The allied armies break our gates at dawn  
And let our general in? By Bacchus, no!  
I have not left my stall, sir, I'm too poor  
For lazy prentices to hand my wares,—  
Such delicate chains, like amber linked with  
love!

Such silvered pins, like hate to let love  
out!—

What know I? But my Guidarello went  
To the fountain of the coppersmiths, when  
first

The double cypress showed upon the east.  
He's home, poor fool, hoarse as a moulting  
bird

From loud throat-loyalty.

“The banners burn  
Still in my soul,” he cries, “as then in air.  
The gray air, the gray houses, and the  
flowers,

The flowers, my father! Thyme and twisted  
sweets

From the blue hills I dream of, and thin  
bells

Of faery folds: pomegranates spun in flame,



## KWANNON

*Kwannon, the Japanese goddess of mercy, is represented with many hands, typifying generosity and kindness. In one of these hands she is supposed to hold an ax, wherewith she severs the threads of human lives.*

I AM the ancient one, the many-handed,  
The merciful am I.  
Here where the black pine bends above the  
    sea  
They bring their gifts to me—  
Spoil of the foreshore where the corals lie,  
Fishes of ivory, and amber stranded,  
And carven beads  
Green as the fretted fringes of the weeds.

Age after age, I watch the long sails pass.  
Age after age, I see them come once more  
Home, as the gray-winged pigeon to the  
    grass,  
The white crane to the shore.  
Goddess am I of heaven and this small town  
Above the beaches brown.  
And here the children bring me cakes, and  
    flowers,  
And all the strange sea-treasures that they  
    find,

For "She," they say, "the Merciful, is  
ours,  
And she," they say, "is kind."

Camphor and wave-worn sandalwood for  
burning  
They bring to me alone,  
Shells that are veined like irises, and those  
Curved like the clear bright petals of a rose.  
Wherefore an hundredfold again returning  
I render them their own—

Full-freighted nets that flash among the  
foam,  
Laughter and love, and gentle eyes at home,  
Cool of the night, and the soft air that swells  
My silver temple bells.  
Winds of the spring, the little flowers that  
shine  
Where the young barley slopes to meet the  
pine,  
Gold of the charlock, guerdon of the rain,  
I give to them again.

Yet though the fishing boats return full-  
laden  
Out of the broad blue east,  
Under the brown roofs pain is their hand-  
maiden,

And mourning is their feast.  
Yea, though my many hands are raised to  
    bless,  
I am not strong to give them happiness.

Sorrow comes swiftly as the swallow flying,  
O, little lives, that are so quickly done !  
Peace is my raiment, mercy is my breath,  
I am the gentle one.  
When they are tired of sorrow and of sighing  
I give them death.

## MONS ANGELORUM

### MOSES, JOSHUA, THE THREE ANGELS OF THE UNIVERSE

*Evening : a slope of Pisgah*

*Moses*—Our span of life is lessening with  
the years,

Our little sun rolls swiftlier to its end  
Among the eternal stars. It is a feather  
Blown from a careless lip into the dark,  
A fallen feather, the lily of a day,  
Brimming with blood and tears instead  
of dew,

And dying with its sleep. Having  
known life,

Having known day, I pass into the  
night ;

Having long spoken with God, I hold  
my peace ;

Having long held the sword, I lay it  
down,

And the new watch relieves me. Is all  
well ?

*Joshua*—O father of my soul, I cannot  
tell.

The burden of the Lord is heavy on me,

And I am broken beneath it.

*Moses—* Since I knew,  
All my desires and cares have gone from  
me.

Rather I think on old forgotten things—  
A song within the temple-court, to her,  
Isis, the Lady of Love. How white she  
sat

Above the crowded gate ! I was a boy :  
I ran and laid a lotus on her knees,  
Dreaming she smiled in answer. Ah,  
those dreams

Far on the shining level of the sands,—  
Thebes and old Tanis builded of a cloud !  
The reeds beside the river, those sweet  
trees

Full of warm buds that ripen and un-  
close

At eve ; the barges passing on the Nile  
Like golden water-fowl with ivory  
wings ;

The gardens and the great pomegranate  
flowers,

And she, my gentle mother in Mizraim,  
Calling me, " Mesu, Mesu."

*Joshua—* I cannot think.  
My sorrow stays me and my grief pre-  
vents.

Yet there are heathen foes and wars to  
come.

I take thy sword. I cannot take thy  
soul,

Master of Law, unshaken friend of God,  
But I can fight for Israel.

*Moses*— Fight, and stand  
Firmly for God. Jehovah is salvation.  
And now, beloved son in all but blood,  
Go, get you down again.

*Joshua*— A little longer,  
Leave me a little longer with you, lord !

*Moses*—No longer, for the gates of life are  
lonely.

Out of the dark man cometh to his life,  
Into the dark he goeth.

Down, look down,  
Down to the clustered tents, each with  
its lives

Of foolish children, vexed with many  
fears,

Agonies, hopes, beliefs inherited,  
Dark hates, fond dreams, divine humil-  
ities.

Shall they go leaderless from stream to  
stream,

Following the far-flung visions of des-  
pair,

These that have been my sheep?

*Joshua*— I cannot, father.

I am a man of war and not of wisdom.

They will not know my voice nor follow  
me.

*Moses*—Man, is it thy faint voice shall be  
uplifted,

To soothe the fearful and uphold the  
strong.

To lead the unshaken tribes to victory  
Against the men of Amalek and Ai,  
Lords of the plain and coast? Is it thy  
strength?

Nay, but Jehovah's in thee. As the  
cloud

Filling the empty valley of the hills,  
As the white flood along the water-  
courses

That once were barren, so His strength  
will pass

Into the pits and runnels of thy soul.

Fight, for the Lord is with thee. Stand  
thou firm.

*Joshua*—Lo, I would rather stay and die  
with thee

Than pass with shining banners and  
with song

Of silver shawms and trumpets, in thy  
place  
Over the river Jordan.

*Moses*—

Nay, I pass

Over a deeper river, with no songs,,  
No mighty trumpetings, no pride of  
banners.

Toil have I borne but triumph is not  
mine.

Once, once mine eyes shall see the  
Promised Land,

Her forts and towers, cities and pleasant  
fields,

Her palms and cedars, vines and olive  
trees,

And then be darkened. Here's my  
heritage,

Here by these mighty chasms, these  
Godward peaks,

My last resort, my lone abiding place.

See, the night comes. How is it with  
thee, son?

*Joshua*—A cloud has drawn between us and  
the plain,

A darkness moves between us and the  
sky,

Full of vague voices, mighty whisper-  
ings,

Wings, and the sound of them.

O, never man  
Has breathed such chilling air as this  
which blows  
Out of the dark. O, never man has  
heard  
Such sounds as these which beat upon  
my soul,  
Known, yet unknown; familiar, yet  
most dread!  
Lord, must I go?

*Moses—* This is the wind of death,  
And this the cold that lies without the  
world,  
And these the sounds that thrill the  
untrodden void  
Beyond the lonelier stars. Go down,  
go down  
To darkened Israel mourning in his  
tents.  
I can no longer see thee. Stand thou  
firm.

*(Joshua goes; the cloud surrounds Moses.)*

O ye celestial presences, great shapes  
With terrible fair faces, towering  
wings,—  
Wings with the wine-deep glow of  
amethyst,

Sheath over sheath like folded water-  
buds  
Lit with an inward flame ; wings pale  
as foam,  
Faint plumes showered with silver ;  
wings serene  
Uplifted in a radiant arc of dawn,—  
Unchain the prisoned pinions of this  
soul,  
Say to the blind bird, Fly. Bid life  
recede,  
A bubble before the advancing wave  
of death.  
From my youth upward I have spoken  
of death,  
Nor knew the word so sweet. There's  
music in it,  
Music to break the heart. O, heavenly  
guards,  
Looking so long in your immortal eyes  
I am grown old. Death calls me as a  
sleep,  
A rest desired, a rich forgetfulness,  
After too much of life.  
*Angel of Darkness—* Life is no more.  
A little flame soon swallowed in the  
night,

A harp that hath no voice, a bow un-  
strung.

Pride of the grass and power of the reed,  
Life is as swift in breaking. Peace be  
on thee ;

Mine are the wings of peace. Men call  
me death,

But so God hath not named me.

*Angel of Light—* Life is past,  
Thy ground is taken, thy tent is pitched  
forever.

Drink of these wells and be forsworn of  
sorrow,

Forsaken of weeping. Men have called  
me death,

Yet am I less and greater.

*Angel of Dreams—* Peace be on thee,  
Peace and good rest. Mine are the  
wings of silence

Folded in silver sleep before my face ;  
This in my hand is golden fruit of Eden,  
Whose scent is sleep ; its flame-white  
flower grew

Along the glades where Adam walked  
with God.

Death have men called me, yet I am  
not death.

Take thy last look on life.

*Moses—*

O, Land of Promise.

From the great plains of Moab to the  
sea,—

Thy blossoming orchards, streams, and  
palaces

Like golden beads threaded on silver  
strings,

Thy towering walls and pinnacles of  
pride,—

A fruitful field it is, ripe for the harvest,  
The harvest of the sword.

I shall not reap it,  
The winepress of His wrath I shall not  
tread.

Plighted am I to silence ; I go down,  
Dead, to the dead, and am no more  
remembered

Upon the lips of men.

Those sceptred kings,  
The solemn dead of old Mizraim, who  
sit

Forever in the sun beside their tombs,  
With blank eyes smiling on eternity,  
Crowned with the reed and lotus, do  
they live

More than their grass and lilies? Those  
I knew,

Princes and scribes, lords of the desert,  
priests  
Learned above the wit of common  
minds,  
Captains and merchants, rulers over  
gold,  
Feathers and spices, emeralds, ivories,  
Brought to the feet of Pharaoh : what  
of them ?  
What of the King, Lord of the North  
and South,  
Son of the Sun, like to the Sun forever?  
A sun? A darkened light, a star o'er-  
whelmed,  
When his fierce horsemen sank beneath  
that surge  
Whose crest was blood and terror,—  
when there died  
On one hushed night, all the firstborn  
of Egypt.

O night divine, I set thine excellence  
Above the twice-crowned noon. Here  
is no star,  
No slenderest crescent poised above the  
world,  
No lingering love of day. But the soft  
dark  
Folds inward as a flower, enfolding me,

My length of little days, wisdom and  
grief,

Light as a drop of rain.

*Angel of Dreams—*

Tender is night,

But tenderer far the limits of this death,

This dream-encompassed city. Here

no sound

Shall wake thee, from thy sleep no

storm disturb,

Though here all storms are born.

Tempest and cloud,

Thunder and hail, the mightiest airs of

God,

The hosts of night, the hot triumphant

dawn,

Seasons, and times, and days, unknown

shall march

O'er thy surrendered head.

*Moses—*

O loneliest rest !

On my lost grave only the winds shall

mourn,

The white rain do me service, the sad

stars

Age after age with endless circling eyes

View this last desolation. In thy

hands,

Into thy hands, O death. Break the

worn thread

That binds the rifted pattern of the  
loom.

O King of kings, forsake not now Thy  
servant.

*Angel of Darkness*—Lo, the black crags leap  
to the vaulted cloud,

Towering without a sound. The dark  
takes substance

In domes and depths of mightiest design  
And seals him from the world. Pil-  
lared like Thebes,

Straight as the tall palm-orchard lift the  
walls

Of this vast grave. Life has no mean-  
ing here,

Light has no name nor place. O human  
heart,

Fain for the little shows of grief, for  
tears

And kindlier sepulchre, no king shall  
sleep

So royally housed as thou.

*Moses*— Draw near, draw near.

The string is all but parted. Shape thy  
wings

Into a roof of silver silences,

A dome of deep repose. O murmuring  
flood,

O tide of death lifting the weed of life,  
O passive arbiter, indifferent power  
In whose still hand the kingdoms of the  
world

Lie like a beggar's coin, beneath whose  
heel

Nations are drifted dust, accept thou  
me.

The bubble of life is broken.

*Angel of Light—* Life begins.

Cover his face, kind Darkness, with  
thy wings

Smooth as the wild swan's breast. Let  
no wind wake

An echo in this holy solitude.

Let the enduring seasons with soft tread  
Circle these sacred hills ; no falling star  
Shiver the fine perfection of repose.

God hath his life. Guard Thou his  
mighty dust.

*Angel of Darkness—I am the firstborn angel.*

Ere this world

Was shapen, I endured within the void  
Waiting the word of God. Beyond this  
world

I shall endure, when the young stars  
are driven

Outworn in dust along the roads of  
space,  
Blown by the breath of chaos. When  
this plan,  
This present firmament, vision and  
light,  
Princes of heaven, dominions, powers,  
are past,  
I shall remain about the eternal throne  
Veiling the thoughts of God. Leave  
him with me,  
Ye younger spirits ; such silence is too  
old  
For your bright souls to bear. Leave  
me my dead.

*( The angels of Light and Dreams take flight.  
The angel of Darkness covers Moses with  
his wings. )*

The dead are mine. Swift they come  
down to me.  
The little life they suffer, their frail  
dream  
Is past. Here is no memory, here no  
hope,  
No reason, no despair nor happiness.  
Only the dust and I. It is His will.  
*Voices of Israel*—Who now shall stand be-  
tween us and our God ?

## A SAXON EPITAPH

*The earth builds on the earth  
Castles and towers ;  
The earth saith of the earth :  
All shall be ours.*

Yea, though they plant and reap  
The rye and the corn,  
Lo, they were bond to Sleep  
Ere they were born.

Yea, though the blind earth sows  
For the fruit and the sheaf,  
They shall harvest the leaf of the  
    rose  
And the dust of the leaf.

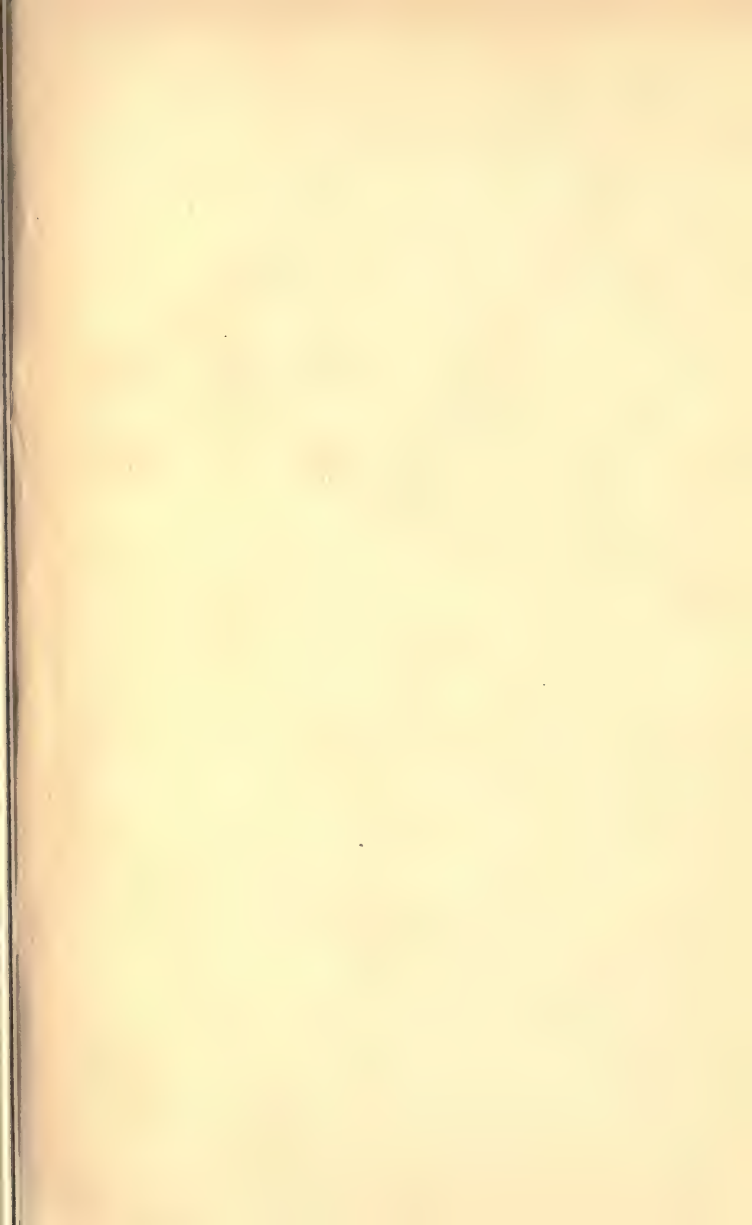
\* Pride of the sword and power  
Are theirs at their need  
Who shall rule but the root of the  
    flower  
The fall of the seed.

They who follow the flesh  
In splendour and tears,  
They shall rest and clothe them  
    afresh  
In the fulness of years.

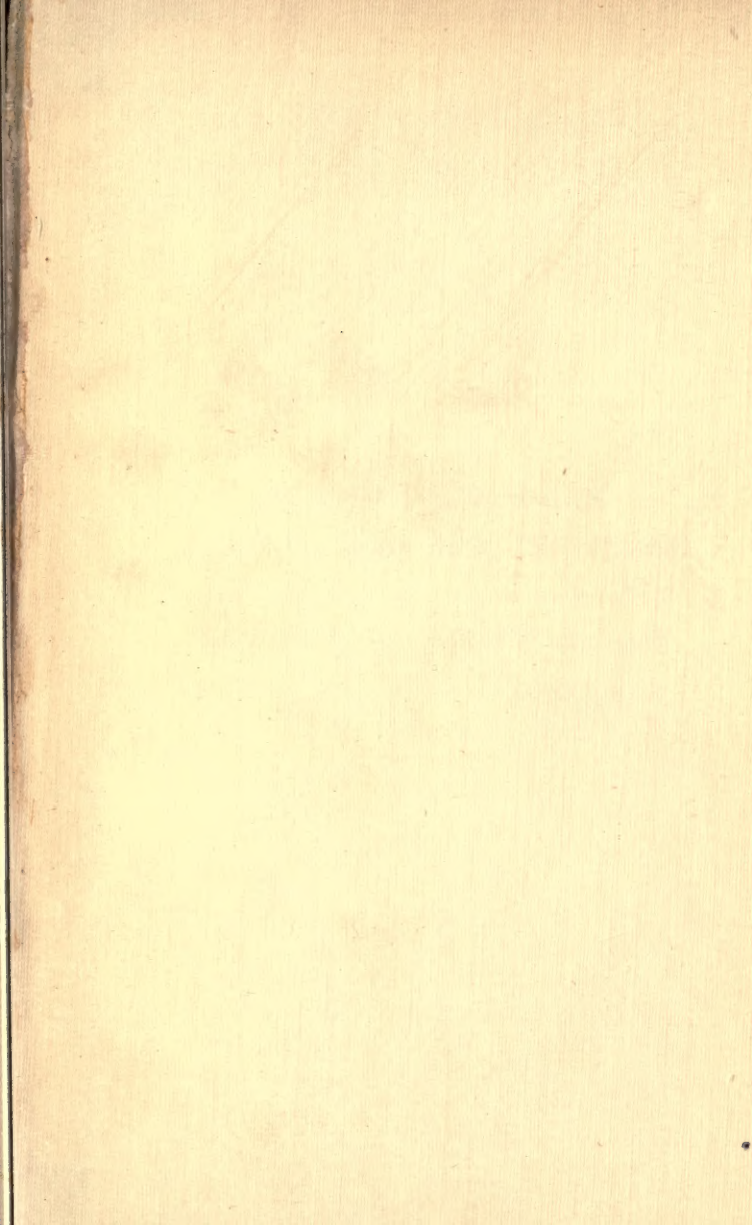
From the dream of the dust they  
came  
As the dawn set free.  
They shall pass as the flower of the  
flame  
Or the foam of the sea.

*The earth builds on the earth  
Cities and towers.  
The earth saith of the earth :  
All shall be ours.*











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